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# How Athlete Citizenship Behaviors Impact Fans' Perceptions of Performance, Source Credibility, Image, and Fans' Future Behavior Intentions

Gregory Stine

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How Athlete Citizenship Behaviors Impact Fans' Perceptions of Performance, Source  
Credibility, Image, and Fans' Future Behavior Intentions

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Recreation and Sport Management

by

Gregory Stine  
Oklahoma State University  
Bachelor of Science in General Business, 2010  
University of Arkansas  
Master of Education in Recreation and Sport Management, 2012

August 2016  
University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Dr. Stephen Dittmore  
Dissertation director

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Dr. Robert Brady  
Committee member

---

Dr. Jean Henry  
Committee member

---

Dr. Merry Moiseichik  
Committee member

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine how knowledge of a professional athlete's charitable involvement affects fans' perceptions of the athlete's performance, source credibility, and image, as well as fans' future behavior intentions. Cultivation theory influenced the study, as it relates to how media portrayal of athletes affects fans' perceptions. A perceived imbalance between (more) negative and (fewer) positive stories also influenced the study. The study is significant in that, given significant positive relationships between this knowledge of charitable involvement and these variables, athletes and teams could choose to promote players' charitable initiatives more. This could potentially impact the media cycle, giving fans a more comprehensive depiction of professional athletes.

Six research questions guided the study: RQ1 asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable involvement affects sport fans' perceptions of his performance, RQ2a asked how this knowledge affects sport fans' perceptions of his expertise, RQ2b asked how this knowledge affects sport fans' perceptions of his attractiveness, RQ2c asked how this knowledge affects sport fans' perceptions of his trustworthiness, RQ3 asked how this knowledge affects sport fans' perceptions of his image, and RQ4 asked how this knowledge affects fans' future behavior intentions. The study was conducted using a survey instrument that measured each of these dependent variables. The participants were 187 undergraduate students in sport-related classes at the same university. While all participants received information about Tyrone Scott, a fictional professional football player, there were three different treatments introduced: some participants received additional information about Scott's charitable contributions, some received information about Scott's off-the-field troubles, and some did not receive any additional information.

A one-way MANOVA analysis was conducted, and it was significant,  $F(12, 358) = 18.09, p < .0001$ , Wilk's  $\lambda = 0.612$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.38$ , at the Bonferroni adjusted level of 0.0167. Significant differences were observed on each of the dependent variables. In all cases, positive treatment scores were significantly higher than negative treatment scores. "No treatment" scores were significantly higher than negative treatment scores on all variables but future behavior intentions. Positive treatment scores were significantly higher than "no treatment" scores on trustworthiness and image.

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*“I understand. Don’t nobody wanna talk about or hear about somebody donating money to a charity...Negativity sells.”*

Allen Iverson to *The Huffington Post*, May 2015

## **I. Introduction**

Sports fans today have more options than ever before when it comes to television programming. ESPN continues to claim the title of the “Worldwide Leader in Sports,” while Fox Sports 1 is the relative newcomer that also offers a 24/7 lineup of sport shows and games. Collegiate conferences – and, in the University of Texas’s case, individual athletic programs – now have their own television networks. With most mid-level or premium cable packages today, it is not hard to find a sporting event or sport news program on TV somewhere.

Based on some recent figures, this increase in sports programming comes at a time when television viewership has declined. Victor Luckerson of *Time* writes, “About 2.6 million households are now ‘broadband only,’ meaning they don’t subscribe to cable or pick up a broadcast signal, according to Nielsen’s Total Audience Report, released December 3. That figure comprises about 2.8% of total U.S. households and is more than double the 1.1% of households that were broadband only last year” (Luckerson, 2014, para. 2). “Overall,” Luckerson continues, “2014 has seen a significantly more precipitous decline in TV viewing than any previous year, Nielsen reports” (Luckerson, 2014, para. 2).

Although “individuals are spending more hours surfing web and viewing streaming services” and television viewership has declined, “TV is still by far America’s favorite entertainment past-time” (Luckerson, 2014, para. 1). ESPN has been particularly immune to the downward trend of television consumption. Derek Thompson of *The Atlantic* writes that ESPN

is “the most popular cable network in America and the only top-10 cable channel whose 18-to-49 primetime audience grew in 2014” (Thompson, 2015, para. 5).

So while television viewership as a whole has been on the decline in America, sports programming has been fairly insulated from any ill effects. Many sport fans still tune in to watch games or programs such as *SportsCenter* or *Fox Sports Live*. In turn, these fans are subjected to the messages shared in these particular broadcasts. Much of the content of *SportsCenter* unsurprisingly consists of game highlights, analysis, and discussion of current events in sport. These current events can be somewhat neutral in nature, such as collective bargaining discussions between players and owners, or discussion about possible sites for the Super Bowl or Olympic games. However, some of these current events are more negative. These include athlete arrests, suspensions, and controversies.

While these events are oftentimes newsworthy, there is a perception that the negative stories outnumber the positive ones on these types of television programs. Many people hold the belief that negativity sells, as noted by Iverson above. NFL icon Randy Moss – now a member of ESPN – asked earlier this year, “...that’s what sells, isn’t it? For a guy in the media to catch a guy in his worst moment to where he might just fire off...the NFL may fine me, but it’s still bringing notoriety to the league. Bad or good, it’s still press” (Pelissero, 2015, para. 15).

The Arizona Cardinals’ Larry Fitzgerald – a 2012 finalist for the NFL’s Walter Payton Man of the Year Award – is also aware that negative stories can sometimes be most popular. “We all understand that controversy sells more than a positive story,” he writes (Fitzgerald, 2015, para. 13). Fitzgerald suggests that any “divide” between athletes and writers is “caused by a changing media landscape, not by mean-spirited people with laptops” (Fitzgerald, 2015, para. 11). “The proliferation of online outlets has produced a lot of pressure to produce more stories



with less information,” he continues, “which has led, in some cases, to a level of distrust” (Fitzgerald, 2015, para. 11).

Fitzgerald’s suggestion to change this is to “cover the good with as much enthusiasm as the bad” (Fitzgerald, 2015, para. 12). In his editorial, Fitzgerald discusses his father’s career as a sports journalist, and how he got to tag along with his father to all different types of sporting events. One of his favorite experiences was meeting the St. Louis Cardinals’ Mark McGwire, who later was involved in a steroid controversy. “When I suggest that Mark McGwire is a nice human being, that shouldn’t surprise you,” he writes. “But I’m going to guess that it does, because how an athlete is covered generally dictates how we think of them on a personal level” (Fitzgerald, 2015, para. 12).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Fitzgerald suggested that how athletes are covered influences fans’ opinions of athletes as people. Because McGwire’s steroid involvement, for instance, is much more likely to make headlines than him being a “nice human being,” these fans are presented with a limited depiction of athletes. Currently, it is unknown how providing fans with more off-the-field information might affect their perceptions of these athletes. Additionally, it is unknown how providing this information might affect fans’ intentions to support a specific team in the future.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine how knowledge of a professional athlete’s athlete citizenship behaviors – such as charitable activities – impact sport fans’ perceptions of the athlete’s performance, source credibility, and image, as well as these fans’ future behavior intentions.

## Research Questions

RQ1: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his performance?

RQ2a: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his expertise from a source credibility perspective?

RQ2b: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his attractiveness from a source credibility perspective?

RQ2c: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his trustworthiness from a source credibility perspective?

RQ3: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his image?

RQ4: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect these fans' future behavior intentions?

## Definitions

- **Source credibility** is “commonly used to imply a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message” (Ohanian, 1990, p.41). This concept is generally used in relation to celebrity endorsement, and consists of three components: expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. The methodology section of the current study addresses source credibility in greater detail.
- **Charitable activities** refer to initiatives that make a positive contribution to society through the donation of resources such as time or money.

- **Athlete citizenship** refers to the “the manner in which a professional athlete conducts himself or herself (on and away from competition) and makes a positive impact on society” (Agyemang, 2014, p. 29). This term is expanded in the literature review.
- **Future behavior intentions** refer to ways in which fans may support a professional team in the future, such as attending games or purchasing team merchandise.

### **Delimitations**

This study was conducted at the University of Arkansas in the spring 2016 semester. The study used a convenience sample, which primarily consisted of undergraduate college students who are enrolled in sport-related courses.

### **Assumptions**

One assumption of this study is that sports fans are generally unaware of professional athletes’ athlete citizenship behaviors. Another assumption is that athlete citizenship is a component of an athlete’s perceived performance, source credibility, and image among fans.

### **Significance of Study**

The current study could yield some significant findings in terms of both contribution to the literature and practical application. As discussed in the literature review, more published studies in the sport management field deal with corporate social responsibility (CSR) rather than individual social responsibility. Regardless of the results, the current study would expand the latter’s presence in the field.

There are also some practical implications of the current study. Regarding RQ1, if it is found that knowledge of an athlete’s charitable activities positively impacts sport fans’ perceptions of the athlete’s performance, it is possible that – given two comparable athletes –

fans may perceive an athlete who engages in charitable activities as a better player than one who does not. This could potentially impact areas in which fans place values on certain players, such as fantasy sports. If RQ2a – how knowledge of an athlete’s charitable activities affects sport fans’ perceptions of his expertise from a source credibility perspective – is answered positively, the implications would be similar. Given Scott’s profession as an NFL player, perceptions of his performance and of his expertise should be closely aligned.

If RQ2b – how knowledge of an athlete’s charitable activities affects sport fans’ perceptions of his attractiveness from a source credibility perspective – is answered positively, professional athletes could promote their charitable involvement on various social media platforms or through their teams to increase their attractiveness among fans of the sport. Citing previous research, Ohanian (1990) writes, “increasing the communicator’s attractiveness enhances positive attitude change (Simon, Berkowitz, and Moyer, 1970; Kahle and Homer, 1985)” (Ohanian, 1990, p. 42). The implications for RQ2c – how knowledge of an athlete’s charitable activities affects sport fans’ perceptions of his trustworthiness from a source credibility perspective – are also related to attitude change. Ohanian (1990) writes, “trustworthiness of the communicator (celebrity) is an important construct in persuasion and attitude-change research” (p. 42). Therefore, if knowledge of these charitable activities does positively affect perceptions of trustworthiness, promotion of an athlete’s charitable activities could be a persuasive technique to employ as an image repair or image enhancement strategy.

Implications are similar for RQ3 – how knowledge of an athlete’s charitable activities affects sport fans’ perception of his image. Should an athlete choose to increase promotion of his or her charitable activities, this could have a positive impact on the athlete’s marketability. Teams could benefit from this, as well. If the Portland Trailblazers of the early 2000s are any

indication (the “Jailblazers”), the off-the-field or off-the-court actions of select players can impact the image of a professional team. Perhaps with increased promotion of players’ charitable activities, some teams could be viewed more favorably than most, even if they don’t necessarily earn a catchy nickname.

If knowledge of an athlete’s charitable activities is found to increase the athlete’s image among sport fans, there could be implications for media outlets, as well. As addressed above, there is a perception that negative stories “sell” and are generally popular. However, if stories about an athlete’s charitable involvement are likely to make fans feel more positively toward him or her, these stories could be appealing to viewers or readers.

The answer to RQ4 – how knowledge of an athlete’s charitable involvement affects fans’ future behavior intentions – could have more of an impact on a sport organization’s financial bottom line. If it is found that learning about an athlete’s off-the-field contributions makes fans more likely to attend games or support the team by purchasing merchandise, teams have a real incentive to promote their players’ charitable activities.

## II. Review of Literature

The areas covered in this literature review are cultivation theory, corporate social responsibility (CSR), CSR and sport, and individual social responsibility (ISR). Cultivation provides the theoretical framework for the study and is addressed first. The history of CSR and its various definitions are discussed next. Following this is a look at how CSR fits into the sport world today, including multiple contexts in which it has been studied; some of these contexts are how CSR is perceived (by fans and by team executives), how it affects a team's financial performance, and how it relates to sustainability and environmentally-friendly business practices. The final component of this literature review is individual social responsibility (ISR). Given the infancy of this concept in sport literature, it is defined and briefly discussed here. Examples of ISR are also included.

### *Cultivation Theory*

The theoretical background for this study comes from cultivation theory. A communication theory, cultivation theory “proposes that our views on reality are cultivated by television, which serves to create basic sets of beliefs” (Yoo, Smith, & Kim, 2013, p. 12). Cultivation is defined as “the consequence of cumulative and long-term exposure to messages repetitively rather than by exposure to particular content” (p. 12). Developed by George Gerbner in the 1960s, cultivation “is one of the three most-cited theories in mass communication research published in key scholarly journals from 1956 to 2000...As of 2010, over 500 studies directly relevant to cultivation have been published” (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010, p. 337). The goal of cultivation analysis “is to ascertain if those who spend more time watching television, other things held constant, are more likely to perceive the real world in ways that reflect those particular messages and lessons” (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010, p. 339).

Morgan and Shanahan (2010) provide a look at some of the earliest studies of cultivation:

Contrary to the usual concerns about the effects of television violence on the stimulation of aggressive behavior, Gerbner and colleagues argued that heavy viewing cultivates exaggerated perceptions of victimization, mistrust, and danger, along with numerous inaccurate beliefs about crime and law enforcement (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1978; Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, Morgan, & Jackson-Beeck, 1979). Compared to matching groups of lighter viewers, heavy viewers were found to be more likely to say that most people “cannot be trusted,” and most people are “just looking out for themselves” (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980; Signorielli, 1990), a pattern that became known as the “Mean World Syndrome.” (p. 339)

The authors add that since these initial studies, cultivation research “expanded to investigate the cultivation of sex-role stereotypes, political orientations and behavior, images of aging, health-related beliefs and behaviors, opinions about science, attitudes toward marriage and the family, work, minorities, sexuality, the environment, religion, affluence, and numerous other issues” (p. 340). Some more recent areas of study include “genre-specific cultivation,” “fear of crime,” and “cognitive explorations and narrative implications” (p. 340-343).

To date, few studies regarding cultivation theory have centered on sport. When addressing the application of the theory to sport communication, Yoo et al. (2013) explain, “television provides many sports programs which embrace violent content...Based on the assumption of this theory, a research may conclude heavy viewers of television sports containing violent content (for example, ice hockey players’ fighting in the rink, Mixed Martial Arts events) would see the television portrayals of sports as a perception of actual reality (Atkins, 2002; Westerman and Tamborini, 2010)” (p. 12).

While research regarding violence in sport would align more closely with the early cultivation studies by Gerbner and colleagues, another possible research area could be how television affects viewers’ perceptions of athletes themselves. The current study focuses on the

latter, using the concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and individual social responsibility (ISR).

### *Corporate Social Responsibility*

One business concept that has been increasingly connected with sport in research is corporate social responsibility (CSR). Bradish and Cronin (2009) classify CSR as a “holistic business mindset” that “can be broadly understood as the responsibility of organizations to be ethical and accountable to the needs of their society as well as to their stakeholders” (p. 692). Brown and Dacin (1997) define CSR as an “organisation’s status and activities with respect to its perceived societal reputation” (p. 68, as cited in Plewa & Quester, 2011, p. 303). In one of the most frequently cited articles regarding corporate social responsibility, Carroll (1979) writes:

For a definition of social responsibility to fully address the entire range of obligations business has to society, it must embody the *economic*, *legal*, *ethical*, and *discretionary* categories of business performance. (p. 499)

Carroll goes on to say, “any given responsibility or action of business could have economic, legal, ethical, or discretionary motives embodied in it,” and that these categories (or “classes”) “are simply to remind us that motives or actions can be categorized as primarily one or another of these four kinds” (p. 500). Ultimately, Carroll states, “The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time” (p. 500.).

Of the four classes of responsibilities outlined by Carroll, “discretionary” would seem to be most descriptive of professional sport organizations’ charitable activities. Discretionary responsibilities are “at business’s discretion,” but “societal expectations do exist for businesses to assume social roles over and above” those in the economic, legal, and ethical categories (p.



500). These discretionary roles “are purely voluntary,” and one example provided is “making philanthropic contributions” (p. 500).

Over the years, the “discretionary” component of Carroll’s initial CSR framework has been changed to “philanthropic,” perhaps a better indicator of the activities that would be included in this particular category (Carroll, 1999, p. 289). Carroll suggests that this component embraces “corporate citizenship” (p. 289). Carroll also explains how the responsibilities of businesses have evolved, stating that while businesses have always had some form of each of the aforementioned responsibilities, “it has only been in recent years that ethical and philanthropic functions have taken a significant place” (Carroll, 1991, p. 40, as cited in Carroll, 1999, p. 289).

Evolution of the concept of CSR is also addressed, as Carroll notes that “scholars may revise and adapt existing definitions of CSR,” and that “we will see new realms in which to think about businesses responsibilities to our stakeholder society” (1999, p. 292). Godfrey (2009) encourages such an expansion of CSR:

CSR, for both scholars and practitioners, needs to move from ‘traditional’ (manufacturing and service) business contexts and expand its reach into economic sectors such as health care, education, culture, and sport. By spreading between institutional fields within society, CSR has the opportunity to be viewed as more legitimate. (p. 700)

Indeed, the concept of corporate social responsibility has been applied to organizations in many different fields, including professional sport.

### *Corporate Social Responsibility and Sport*

The prominence of CSR in the world of sport is a relatively recent happening. Bradish and Cronin (2009) explain that, “while CSR has been well established in the mainstream business literature, it has only begun to receive attention within sport management” (p. 692).

Some of the articles related to this pairing of CSR and sport explain why sport is unique to other corporations and businesses in the context of social responsibility.

According to Smith and Westerbeek (2007), both corporations and sport organizations “are members of the community subject to the expectations of society and both can potentially generate social benefits” (p. 6). However, there are differences between these two entities, as “the nature of sport lends itself to being uniquely positioned to influence society in general and communities in particular” (p. 6). The following 10 characteristics of sport are offered as examples:

1. Rules of fair play: equality, access, diversity
2. Safety of participants and spectators
3. Independence of playing outcomes
4. Transparency of governance
5. Pathways for playing
6. Community relations policies
7. Health and activity foundation
8. Principles of environmental protection and sustainability
9. Developmental focus of participants
10. Qualified and/or accredited coaching (p. 5-6)

Smith and Westerbeek go on to say that “sports organisations are already implicitly woven into society, an integrative characteristic limited in commercial business organisations,” and “the use of sport as a tool of corporate social responsibility is contingent on the previously discussed social responsibilities intrinsic to sport itself” (p. 6). Although “the social responsibilities implicit to sport remain underdeveloped,” (p. 10) the authors aim to remedy this by identifying some elements that are unique to “sport corporate social responsibility,” or SCSR:

1. Mass media distribution and communication power
2. Youth appeal
3. Positive health impacts
4. Social interaction
5. Sustainability awareness
6. Cultural understanding and integration
7. Immediate gratification benefits (p. 8-9)

Smith and Westerbeek conclude by acknowledging that there is some overlap between social responsibilities of corporations and social responsibilities of sport organizations, and by explaining that each of these entities can be beneficial to society.

Corporate managers and sport managers alike can enhance the economic prospects of their organisations and maximise the social benefits that they deliver to society by better harnessing the power of sport to deliver on social and community objectives. (p. 10)

While Smith and Westerbeek identify specific aspects of social responsibility that are related to sport, Godfrey (2009) considers how sport relates to Scott's (2001) "three pillars of institution" (p. 711). "For Scott," writes Godfrey, "institutions may be *cognitive...regulative...or normative*" (p. 711). Cognitive institutions are those "that shape how we think about and view the world and create orthodoxy," regulative institutions "create and enforce regulations on social life through rules, norms, and laws," and normative institutions "create and communicate a sense of what is right, appropriate, or legitimate" (Scott (2001), as cited in Godfrey (2009), p. 711). Godfrey explains how sport relates to each of these:

***Sport as a Cognitive Institution.*** In many ways, sport serves as a physical manifestation of a Jungian or Weberian archetype for a framework that views life, particularly economic life, as a game, complete with rules, referees, clear demarcation of teams, and importantly, bedrock notions of what constitutes "fair play"...

***Sport as a Regulative Institution.*** The social issue here goes deeply to the heart of notions of fair play; how sport organizations and governing bodies choose to regulate themselves sends strong messages to other social institutions and actors about the importance of regulation and the promise of self-regulation...

***Sport as a Normative Institution.*** For many, sport exists as a religion, complete with a theology (recipes for winning), gods and demons, and clearly articulated rites of worship (e.g., tailgating rituals among American football fanatics. (p. 711)

Godfrey adds that sport can be good for CSR by providing "a highly visible and well-regarded set of social actors" (p. 712). He also suggests that sport has created two very different

“institutional auras”: one of “moral goodness,” and one “that defines victory, at any price, as the ultimate moral end” (p. 712). Therefore, Godfrey concludes with the following:

I hope that the discourse concerning CSR in sport helps find a middle ground: a set of institutional norms and practices that moderates the abusive elements of competition while stopping short of deifying athletes, athletic achievement, or sport in general. (p. 712)

Babiak and Wolfe (2009) support the assertion that CSR and sport have not always been associated with one another. However, they write, “professional sport organizations are now entering into socially responsible initiatives at a rapid pace” (p. 719). These organizations include more than teams and leagues; apparel companies such as Nike and Reebok, as well as sport corporations such as Palace Sport and Entertainment, are also engaging in activities “to bring messages and resources to underprivileged and other members of society who may not otherwise be the targets of socially responsible initiatives” (p. 720). Regarding sports teams specifically, the authors claim, “Nearly all professional sport teams have established charitable foundations over the past decade and a half” (p. 720).

In addition to identifying certain charitable initiatives and foundations, Babiak and Wolfe (2009) also address the “unique aspects of sport that merit exploration of CSR within this industry” (p. 720). These include passion, economics, transparency, and stakeholder management (p. 722-723).

Inoue, Kent, and Lee (2011) offer a study of sport CSR’s relationship to the corporate financial performance (CFP) of professional sport teams. The study’s hypothesis predicts that CSR and professional sport teams’ financial performance are positively correlated. However, aggregate regression analyses indicate that CSR has “insignificant effects on both attendance and operating margin,” while individual league analyses show that CSR has “a significant negative effect on current operating margins for MLB and NFL teams and future margins for NBA, NFL,

and NHL teams” (p. 544). According to the authors, “Schuler and Cording argue that the insignificant CSR-CFP relationship can be ascertained when consumers are not aware of corporate social actions due to the lack of relevant information” (p. 544). The authors add that the “insignificant results may also suggest the failure of teams to use their CSR initiatives in strategic contexts,” and that “the insignificant effect of CSR on attendance may indicate that there is a lack of connection between areas of philanthropic activities by team-related foundations and teams’ operations” (p. 544). Though the study’s hypothesis is not supported by the findings, the authors note that, “until more evidence is collected and analyzed within sport, we should be hesitant to abandon completely the idea that CSR may be linked to financial performance” (p. 548).

In addition to financial performance, sponsorship is another business aspect that is linked to CSR in the sport literature. Plewa and Quester (2011) investigate this possible connection and propose a conceptual framework depicting it. They begin by acknowledging the “unique potential” for sport sponsorship to impact organizations, while also pointing out that many areas related to sport sponsorship have yet to be developed “both theoretically and empirically” (p. 302). The authors claim that one such unexplored area is the “contribution” of sponsorship to CSR (p. 302). Studying these two areas in conjunction could contribute to “the development of a conceptual framework explaining customer response to CSR initiatives” (p. 302). Additionally, for a more practical application, sport sponsorship “could be used very effectively to communicate sponsors’ CSR commitment to employees and to consumers,” which could then “enhance organisational outcomes such as consumer attitudes, retention and purchase intentions (external)” as well as “service staff motivation, job satisfaction and higher levels of service quality (internal)” (p. 302).

Following a discussion of CSR and previous literature, Plewa and Quester propose their framework regarding CSR in sponsorship. Two key components of this framework are customer perceptions of CSR and staff perceptions of CSR. In this case, staff refers to the staff of the socially responsible company. Regarding customer perceptions of CSR, the authors cite previous research that has shown that customers react positively toward a company's CSR involvement, and in some cases have been willing to pay higher prices for products or switching brands entirely in order to support a socially responsible company. As for staff or employee perceptions of CSR, the authors cite – among others – a 2006 study from Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera and Williams in which the authors used organizational justice theory “to derive several propositions positively linking CSR with job satisfaction, job performance and organisational performance” (p. 307). The primary takeaway from the background on these two components is that CSR has positively impacted the attitudes of both consumers and staff in previous studies.

The other component in the proposed conceptual framework is a group of factors that influence the effectiveness of sponsorship. These factors are consumer-related, employee-related, or sponsor-related. Consumer-related factors that influence sponsorship effectiveness are consumer involvement, brand familiarity, knowledge of the event, “emotions elicited by the sponsored event,” and “the importance attributed by consumers or employees on socially responsible practices” of companies in general or the particular sponsor (p. 308). Employee-related factors include whether or not the sponsor is actively involved in the local community, the extent to which “the sponsorship helps in meeting employees’ needs in relation to control, belongingness and meaningful existence,” and the “motivation employees attribute to the CSR initiative” (p. 309). Some sponsor-related influence factors include “congruence, brand prominence or equity, sponsorship articulation and other leveraging activities” (p. 309).

Sponsorship exposure is the final component of the conceptual framework. In the model, it directly impacts consumers' and employees' perceptions of CSR, and is influenced by the aforementioned factors. The consumers' and employees' perceptions then lead to the internal (staff motivation, staff satisfaction, staff retention) and external (consumer satisfaction, consumer purchases, consumer retention) outcomes, respectively, depending on the quality of the service provision.

The authors claim that this framework is useful for “properties and sponsors alike as they attempt to evaluate the impact of their activities” (p. 312). It ultimately “provides much needed assistance to managers looking to more clearly articulate the benefits they seek from establishing mutually beneficial sponsorship relationships” (p. 312).

Another aspect of sport CSR that is addressed in the literature is how fans feel about it. Walker and Kent (2009) write that participants in their study show a “general positivity” toward CSR in sport, and that teams' CSR activities have a “strong and positive” impact on organizational reputation (p. 758). The authors also note, “CSR is useful to view as an essential ‘non-product’ dimension of the organization” (p. 759). This is to say that although CSR is not reflected in wins or losses, it can be viewed as essential to the organization as a whole. Walker and Kent close by suggesting that in order to “properly manage consumer relationships and the reputation of the organization,” managers “should not only adopt CSR as an integral part of their mission, but must also communicate this mission widely” (p. 763).

In another study related to perceptions of CSR, Sheth and Babiak (2010) discuss how CSR is viewed among professional sport team executives, as well as how sport teams engage in CSR activities. They begin by acknowledging that while CSR has gained traction in recent years as a necessary function of businesses, “there is a great deal of variation in understanding how the

term is characterized, what role it plays in the organization, and how it should be carried out” (p. 433). Thus, the purpose of their study “was to gain an understanding of how CSR is perceived by sport executives as well as to investigate the nature of professional sport teams’ CSR-related efforts” (p. 434).

Using a mixed-methods approach, the authors sent a survey to team owners and community relations directors for teams in the NBA, NFL, NHL, and MLB. Through content analysis of responses to open-ended items, they sought to identify CSR priorities in the sport world. Carroll’s initial four elements of CSR – ethical, legal, economic, and discretionary – were used collectively as a “starting point” (p. 438). In order, the following “appeared to be the most relevant” and were identified as priorities: philanthropic, community, strategic, partnership, leadership, ethical, legal, and stakeholders (p. 442-444).

Sheth and Babiak (2010) also used quantitative analysis to determine what types of activities the team executives most associate with CSR. The two highest “yes” frequencies occurred in response to whether or not donating funds to nonprofits/charities (85.2%) and supporting social causes (81.5%) are considered CSR activities (p. 439). The two lowest “yes” frequencies came in response to whether or not making a profit (14.8%) and paying dividends to stockholders (3.7%) are considered CSR activities (p. 439). Also, they measured means to determine which components of CSR the respondents deemed to be most important. The respondents viewed the ethical part of CSR as most important ( $M = 1.71$ ), while they perceived the economic component to be least important ( $M = 3.18$ ).

Overall, the results “suggest that professional sport executives approach CSR in a community-oriented, collaborative, and strategic manner in order to achieve their ethical, philanthropic, and legal responsibilities” (Sheth & Babiak, 2010, p. 446). Though some of the



same terms were used in the above eight priorities, “Carroll’s hierarchy of CSR responsibilities appears to be different in the sport industry,” with philanthropic and ethical concerns ranking among the highest priorities (p. 447). This speaks to the sport industry’s unique position in the business world. The authors conclude by saying that the study has “opened the door” to more CSR-related questions, “justifying that the issue continues to grow, evolve, and necessitate additional examination” (p. 448).

The environment is another context in which sport CSR has been studied. Babiak and Trendafilova (2010) seek to identify the motives and pressures that lead to sport organizations participating in sustainable business practices. They contend that these sustainable practices compose an element of CSR because “they are often initiated for reasons other than to make a firm money (but sometimes do), they are not (always) required by law, and they benefit society” (p. 11). The preceding description applies to many types of CSR activities, particularly those in the “discretionary” or “philanthropic” category proposed by Carroll (1979, 1999).

The questions that guide the study are: “what external conditions and internal pressures lead organizations to address the environment as a priority?” and “how do the external conditions/internal pressures and motives reported determine the types of environmental initiatives adopted – whether they are high engagement or low engagement?” (p. 12). Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the authors “investigated teams in five professional sports leagues in North America,” which are the NBA, NFL, MLB, the NHL, and MLS (p. 15). The qualitative method of data collection includes interviews with team executives.

The study’s results show that “executives responsible for decision-making regarding sustainable management practices consider multiple motives for engaging in environmental CSR” (p. 17). Based on their responses, these executives were “primarily seeking legitimacy by

conforming to institutional pressures and expectations and taking advantage of the strategic opportunities offered through these types of activities” (p. 17). The data also show that “corporate environmental responsibility” is a concept to which “sport businesses are increasingly paying attention from a strategic perspective” (p. 17). According to Babiak and Trendafilova, the study’s findings “illustrate that CSR motivations are complex and involve the interplay among a number of different organizations and societal factors” (p. 22).

While the above studies examine CSR in various contexts, some academic manuscripts offer specific examples of CSR practices. Filizoz and Fisne (2011) identify and briefly analyze some of these. One example is Federation Internationale de Football Association’s (FIFA) “Football For Hope” program. In 2005, FIFA partnered with Streetfootballworld, which is “a social profit organization that links relevant actors in the field of Development through Football” (p. 1411). Together, they established the Football for Hope Movement “as a global movement that uses the power of football to achieve sustainable social development” (p. 1411). A second case study focuses on the NBA Cares program. Citing the NBA’s Web site, the authors explain that this program “works with internationally recognized youth-serving programs that support education, youth and family development, and health-related causes” (p. 1412). Filizoz and Fisne conclude that while “there is a close and strong integration between CSR and sport...there is still little guidance how sport related bodies can implement and manage CSR activities” (p. 1416).

Another specific example of CSR in the literature comes from Kihl, Babiak, and Tainsky (2014), who analyze the implementation of a sport team’s corporate community involvement (CCI) initiative. CCI “is becoming an important strategic aspect of corporate social responsibility in professional sport,” and strategic CCI “typically involves aligning an

organization's social initiatives with [its] core competencies and long term strategies" (p. 324). Recently, corporate organizations have partnered with nonprofit organizations in order to serve their local communities. An example of this in the sport world is Major League Baseball's (MLB) Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program, which is "delivered in partnership with MLB clubs and different youth association such as the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and city parks and recreation departments" (p. 324).

The authors point out some challenges of such a partnership, including the management of the following: contract/agreement terms, management structures and responsibilities, human resources, accountability and transparency, and evaluation (p. 324). These challenges could potentially limit the quality of the partnership's ultimate offering to the community. One way to assess the processes involved in the partnership and ensure the quality of its outcomes is using Chen's (2005) program theory evaluation. In using this evaluation method, "program stakeholders hold a set of assumptions of how a program should be constructed and implemented...and how well each process should work" (p. 324). The authors use this evaluation method to assess the partnership between an MLB organization and a city's park and recreation departments.

### *Sport Marketing and Promotion*

Another aspect of sport CSR is the promotion of events by teams or individual athletes. Though this specific type of promotion is not featured in the literature, there are several pieces regarding sport marketing. Kunkel et al. (2013) stress the importance of aligned messages between leagues and teams, as this "should increase the leveragability of marketing actions and increase their success" (p. 188). An example of this would be both the NFL and one of its teams promoting the league's "Play 60" campaign. Hopwood (2005) acknowledges the importance of

this type of public relations, saying that PR is “potentially as important to sports clubs as it is to the business world” (p. 175).

In recent years, athletes, teams, and leagues have used the Internet for promotion. Church (2000) reports that “worldwide revenues from advertising on sports related sites” equaled \$612 million in 1999 (Church, 2000, as cited in Evans & Smith, 2004, p. 87). Evans and Smith (2004) point out that this number is much lower than Church’s 2005 projection of \$6.27 billion (p. 87). “Developing websites that have the ability to not only attract new sports fans, but also retain them” is a current issue that sport managers face, according to Carlson and O’Cass (2012, p. 464). The use of social media has been especially popular within the past several years. As Ioakimidis (2010) writes, “More powerful media have increased user interaction and user empowerment” (p. 273). This interaction through various social media sites can lead to a more “connected” fan base. This is also a way for teams to stay connected with partners and sponsors, as “the relationship with sponsors is the main source of commercial performance and key to the survival and growth of those organizations” (Pieters et al., 2012, p. 433).

### *Individual Social Responsibility (ISR)*

While much of the research about social responsibility and sport has focused on sport teams and organizations, there have been a few recent studies about individual professional athletes being involved in socially responsible and/or charitable activities. Agyemang and Singer (2013) introduce this concept of individual social responsibility (ISR). They note that prior to their study, “there [was] not an ISR framework (general business or sport)...given the absence of an ISR framework and literature, it should be noted that our theoretical musings were influenced by corporate social responsibility (CSR)” (p. 49). They then acknowledge the difference between ISR and CSR: “CSR

research takes a macro-level approach, investigating the social responsibility of large-scale corporations and businesses as a whole, whereas ISR is geared toward the micro-level (i.e., the individual)” (p. 49).

After introducing the concept of ISR, Agyemang and Singer (2013) apply it to Black male athletes in an NBA organization. Through interviews with these athletes, the authors find that “the most salient issues concerning the ISR of Black male athletes” are the following: owing a social responsibility to self, being a role model, responsibility to the Black community, and engaging in genuine activity (p. 55). The theme most relevant to the current study is the fourth theme, engaging in genuine activity:

The last theme was related to professional Black male athletes involving themselves with genuine causes. Participants asserted these activities must be something for which the athlete has passion and be heartfelt, such as causes concerning the Black community or other general causes. For instance, one participant mentioned how he helped out his former high school that had a predominately Black population, while others hosted basketball clinics...Another example of these activities is educational initiatives (e.g., athlete funded scholarships and facilitating big brother/big sister programs). (p. 66)

The authors note that this theme is most similar to the “discretionary” or “philanthropic” element of CSR. However, there are some differences when considering individual athletes instead of organizations:

However, while Carroll stated society has no specific message as to what discretionary activity requires, from the sentiments of the participants, it was almost as if society demanded that Black male athletes carry out discretionary initiatives. While Carroll gave donations as an example, what the participants described as genuine causes are similar to what scholars have identified as cause-related sports marketing (see Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwell, & Clars, 2003), i.e., when a sport team works with a charitable organization to engage in CSR activity. In this case, a professional athlete could utilize their stardom to accomplish similar acts and bring awareness to a social cause. The professional athletes in this study illustrated the desire to engage in this type of activity, while all participants felt it is necessary. (p. 67)

In addition to his work on ISR, Agyemang (2014) also explores the concept of athlete citizenship. He defines athlete citizenship as “the manner in which a professional athlete conducts himself or herself (on and away from competition) and makes a positive impact on society” (p. 29). He expands on the concept with the following:

In characterizing this concept, consider the awards that are awarded to businesses (large, medium, and small) for being outstanding citizens within their communities. For example, this may include sound practices when conducting business and engaging the community via charity work. This same rationale applies to athlete citizenship. (p. 29)

Agyemang then provides some examples of professional athletes involved in charitable initiatives, adding, “athlete citizens must demonstrate good acts on and away from their sport” (p. 29).

While there are not many studies that address ISR in particular, there are some that address the relationship between athletes and charity. Babiak et al. (2012) claim that professional athletes have received increased recognition of their charitable involvement recently, thanks in large part to Andre Agassi, Tiger Woods, and Lance Armstrong (p. 159-160). Agassi, Woods, and Armstrong “have the biggest charitable foundations of any professional athlete in terms of donations and programs as well as assets,” with Agassi’s at \$81 million, Woods’ at \$48 million, and Armstrong’s at \$31 million (charitynavigator.com, 2009, as cited in Babiak et al., 2012, p. 160). Babiak et al. go on to explain how professional athletes’ charitable involvement has not gone unnoticed:

This trend of philanthropy and activism among athletes has been recognized since 1994 by USA Today through its Most Caring Athlete Award, and organizations such as Athletes for Hope, MVPhilanthropy, the National Heritage Fund, the Sports Philanthropy Project, and the Giving Back Fund, which have been created by and/or for athletes to provide support for those who have a deep commitment to charitable and community causes. (p. 160)

While athletes' participation in charity has been recognized by the above organizations, it has not been as recognized in the academic literature. "Little academic attention has been paid to the professional athletes themselves as philanthropists," according to Babiak et al., "and scant attention has been paid to the decision-making processes and motives behind philanthropic behaviors in this group of individuals" (p. 160). The authors attempt to rectify this by examining "the motivations of professional athletes who behave charitably by establishing their own foundation" (p. 172). The study's findings suggest that these motivations are "complex and nuanced," that "athletes who form foundations appear to consider the strategic implications of their philanthropic work," and that "athletes who are typically established in their league (i.e., by years of service and salary) have a higher rate of owning a charitable foundation" (p. 172).

One such established athlete is the NFL's Charles Woodson. Abdrabboh (2010) writes that Woodson has donated "\$2 million to the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott Children's and Women's Hospital, a 1.1-million-square-foot hospital" (p. 101). In an interview with Abdrabboh, Woodson expresses that "it is the time now to definitely help others in some sort of way," citing his own personal success (p. 101). He adds that he would like to "help out those most in need" with his donation, and that helping the hospital is the "tip of the iceberg" in regards to his charitable involvement (p. 101).

Another (now retired) NFL player, Hines Ward, has also been actively involved in the community. According to Lee (2007), Ward has founded "the Hines Ward Helping Hands Foundation to help children of mixed ethnicities," and "has become a vocal advocate for the plight of mixed-race individuals and the discrimination they face" (p. 19). In an interview with Lee, Ward – a self-described "Korean African American" – cites social change and ending discrimination as motives for his charitable involvement (p. 20-21). In a separate piece, Lee

(2007) writes that although Ward has experienced discrimination in the past, he “has retained his sense of dignity and a desire to help others who are discriminated against on the basis of their mixed-race heritage” (p. 23).

Professional athletes like Woodson and Ward often have varying reasons and motives for establishing charitable foundations. Citing previous research, Filo et al. (2012) explain, “an individual is motivated to take action on behalf of a charitable cause and make a difference based upon three beliefs” (p. 128). These beliefs are as follows: “the belief that making a difference will personally impact the individual,” “the belief that a difference can actually be made,” and the belief “that involvement within a particular social context will result in making a difference” (Deci & Ryan, 1985, and Ryan & Deci, 2000, as cited in Filo et al., 2012, p. 128). Woolf et al. (2013) add that some people “may be motivated to support the charity because of a personal connection with the organization or a high degree of affinity with the cause” (p. 96).

### *Summary*

This review of literature has addressed cultivation theory, as well as multiple aspects of the relationship between sport and charity. Articles about corporate social responsibility (CSR), sport CSR, and individual athletes’ charitable involvement have been included to provide a comprehensive look at the subject. In summary, articles regarding sport and CSR have become more prominent over the past several years, as this relationship has been studied from a number of different angles: motivations for teams engaging in CSR activities, how fans feel about teams’ CSR activities, and how teams’ CSR activities affect financial performance are examples. There are fewer articles regarding the relationship between sport and ISR and/or athlete citizenship. Agyemang and Singer (2013) and Agyemang (2014) have provided a good



foundation, however, on which future studies can be built. The current study aims to expand on these concepts.

### **III. Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to determine how knowledge of a professional athlete's charitable involvement affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's performance, source credibility, and image, and these fans' future behavior intentions. This chapter describes the methodology used to investigate this. The subjects and sampling frame, instruments for data collection, administration of instruments and data collection, and data analysis are detailed below.

#### **Subjects and Sampling Frame**

The sample for this study consisted of college students in sport-related classes at the University of Arkansas. This was a convenience sample rather than a truly random sample. To obtain adequate power (.70) at the  $\alpha=.05$  level for a study with three groups, six dependent variables and a medium effect size ( $\eta^2=.06$ ), the sample size for each group should be 54 participants (Stevens, 2002, p. 247). A sample size of 200 participants for the study would ideally place between 66 and 67 participants in each group. Aiming for 66 or 67 participants per group rather than 54 accounted for a smaller than expected sample; it also allowed for an effect size measure below  $\eta^2=.06$ . After handing out surveys at nine different classes, the sample size was 187 students. Each of the four classifications listed on the survey were represented: the sample included 26 freshmen, 35 sophomores, 48 juniors, and 72 seniors. Six participants declined to indicate their current classification. The average age of the participants was 21.0 years. Seventy females (37.8%) and 115 males (62.2%) completed the survey instrument; two participants chose not to disclose gender. The demographic data are detailed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1

*Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	70	37.8	37.8
Male	115	62.2	100.0
Total	185	100.0	

Table 2

*Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Class*

Class	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Freshman	26	14.4	14.4
Sophomore	35	19.3	33.7
Junior	48	26.5	60.2
Senior	72	39.8	100.0
Total	181	100.0	

**Instruments for Data Collection**

There were three separate versions of a survey used in this study. Each version included the same cover page, which detailed the purpose of the study, estimated how long the survey would take, and informed participants that their participation is optional. The cover page also included contact information for the study's principal researcher, the faculty advisor, and the point of contact for the University of Arkansas' Internal Review Board (See Appendix A).

Another common element of the three survey versions was a short profile of a fictional athlete from an NFL team. This profile consisted of some pictures of the athlete, biographical information, and some performance-related information (select statistics and career highlights).

The accomplishments of the fictional player in this study – as well as date of birth, height, and weight – were taken from NFL wide receiver Anquan Boldin (accessed from *Pro Football Reference*). Boldin was recently named the 2015 Walter Payton Man of the Year,

which takes into account both on-field and off-the-field contributions. In order to eliminate any possible biases, the survey used a different name for the fictional player. This name was generated from some fellow members of the 2003 NFL Draft class. Selected directly after Boldin was linebacker Bryan Scott. The next wide receiver taken after Boldin was Tyrone Calico. The name ultimately chosen for this fictional player, then, was Tyrone Scott. Calico's pictures were used in the instruments, as he played the same position as Boldin. Additionally, since Calico played for the Tennessee Titans, this was the team represented by this fictional athlete.

For each version of the survey, a different treatment followed this profile. Version 1's treatment consisted of a list of Tyrone Scott's charitable or community-related activities over the course of his career. As was the case with the biographical information, the activities and achievements included in this treatment were actually Anquan Boldin's. This treatment detailed specific initiatives in which Boldin has been involved (establishing his own foundation, assisting Oxfam America, hosting various charity events) as well as awards that he has won for his charitable and community contributions (Byron "Whizzer" White Award in 2014, Walter Payton Man of the Year Award in 2015). When necessary, Boldin's name was replaced with Scott's (when referencing the Tyrone Scott Foundation, for instance). This treatment also included a picture of Tyrone Calico signing autographs for fans at a Tennessee Titans practice (See Appendix B).

Version 2's treatment consisted of a list of various off-the-field transgressions attributed to Tyrone Scott. These particular instances were taken from multiple NFL players over the past few years. Profootballtalk.com keeps track of NFL players' arrests, and one incident found on this site – a player was pulled over for speeding, and the officer found marijuana in the car – was

modified to include Scott's name. In addition to the arrest, two suspensions were included: one 4-game suspension resulting from a positive test for performance-enhancing substances, and one 1-game suspension for violating the NFL's personal conduct policy. This treatment also uses the same image as version 1's treatment (See Appendix C).

Unlike versions 1 and 2, version 3 of the survey did not feature any additional information about Tyrone Scott. Version 3 survey participants reviewed only the biographical information and on-field achievements of the player before completing the items on the pages that followed (See Appendix D).

Survey items measuring team identification, perceived performance, source credibility, perceive image, and future behavior intentions followed the treatment for each version. As with the cover page and initial player profile, these items were the same for each version of the survey. The participants were first asked to provide demographic information. For this particular study, the demographic items included age, classification (freshman/sophomore/junior/senior), and gender.

The next set of items was related to team identification. The team identification items used in the survey came from the Team Identification Index (TII). Developed by Trail and James (2001), the TII measures the extent to which participants identify with a given sports team. The items in the scale are as follows:

I consider myself to be a real fan of (team).  
 I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of (team).  
 Being a fan of (team) is very important to me.

Participants were asked to respond to these statements using a 7-point Likert scale with "Strongly disagree" and "Strongly agree" as the anchors. These items were included in the survey instrument to assess how strongly the participants identified with the Tennessee Titans,

the team on which this fictional NFL athlete is purported to play. This information was used to identify potential biases among participants. Fink, Parker, Brett, and Higgins (2009) use the TII as part of a study to determine how players' off-the-field behavior affects team identification. They reported the scale's reliability estimate was "high ( $\alpha = .87$ )" (p. 148).

The next set of items prompted participants to assess the on-field performance of Tyrone Scott. The relevant performance information was provided in the initial profile that all versions of the survey included. Koo, Ruibley, and Dittmore (2012) developed this 4-item, 7-point semantic differential scale in order "to evaluate the fictitious endorser's on-field performance" (p. 152). The items used in their study included the name of the fictitious endorser, Morgan Mitchell. The items were customized for this study, and they read as follows:

This player's performance has been unreliable/reliable.  
 This player's performance has been bad/good.  
 This player's performance has been inconsistent/consistent.  
 This player's performance has been undependable/dependable.

Because this scale is a semantic differential scale, a range of 1-7 was placed between the above anchors. Participants would respond with a "1" if they felt the player's performance had been most unreliable, for instance, and would respond with a "7" if the performance had been most reliable.

The next set of items in the survey prompted the participants to assess Tyrone Scott's source credibility. The source credibility items used in the instrument came from Ohanian's Source Credibility Scale (1990). This scale is designed to measure the source credibility – a combination of attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise – of celebrity endorsers. Though the current study does not deal specifically with endorsement, Ohanian claims that the "present scale can be adapted to a variety of situations" (p. 49). This scale is applicable to the current study due to the usage of a fictional celebrity. The anchors in Ohanian's scale are as follows:

- Attractiveness
  - Attractive – Unattractive
  - Classy – Not Classy
  - Beautiful – Ugly
  - Elegant – Plain
- Trustworthiness
  - Dependable – Undependable
  - Honest – Dishonest
  - Reliable – Unreliable
  - Sincere – Insincere
  - Trustworthy – Untrustworthy
- Expertise
  - Expert – Not an expert
  - Experienced – Inexperienced
  - Knowledgeable – Unknowledgeable
  - Qualified – Unqualified
  - Skilled – Unskilled

Koo et al. (2012) added one item to the original 14 items (Not sexy – Sexy), and this was duplicated for the current study. This new item joins the existing four items in the Attractiveness category. Participants were asked to rate the player on a 1-7 Likert scale regarding the above qualities. The anchors were placed in reverse order on the instruments; if a participant viewed this player as extremely inexperienced, for instance, he or she would indicate “1” on that particular set of anchors (extremely experienced would yield a “7”). Upon developing the above scale, Ohanian established reliability scores for each of the 3 constructs: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. For items referencing a female celebrity, the respective construct reliability scores were very high ( $\alpha = .904, .895, \text{ and } .885$ ). For items referencing a male celebrity, these scores were also very high ( $\alpha = .893, .896, \text{ and } .892$ ) (Ohanian, 1990, p. 47). In establishing convergent and discriminant validity for the scale, Ohanian tested these three constructs for congenerity. The congenerity test “assumes that the correlation coefficient among the three traits is equal to unity – that is, the three dimensions of attractiveness, trustworthiness,

an expertise are the same” (p. 48). The congenerity assumption was rejected ( $\chi^2 = 341.80$ , d.f. = 3,  $p < 0.001$ ), determining that the three constructs “do not measure the same trait” (p. 48). As for discriminant validity, the “solution for this model yielded a goodness-of-fit of  $\chi^2 = 12.06$ , d.f. = 13 ( $p = 0.523$ ), which represents a good fit of the data to the hypothesized model” (p. 48). These analyses indicate that the scale “has acceptable convergent and discriminant validity” (p. 48).

Following the source credibility items on the instrument were items designed to measure perceived athlete image. These items were initially developed by Choi and Rifon (2007) and recently used by Brown (2016). Brown notes that the scale used in his study was “modified from Choi and Rifon’s (2007) scale used to measure celebrity athlete genuineness” and also indicates that the scale has been found to be reliable ( $\alpha = .886$ ) (p. 32). The items on this athlete image scale read as follows:

I believe this athlete is wise.  
 I believe this athlete is pleasant.  
 I believe I could be comfortable around this athlete.  
 I believe this athlete is sophisticated.

Participants indicated how strongly they disagreed or agreed with each of the above statements on a 7-point Likert scale. It should be noted that this scale was preceded by “After considering this information” in the current study’s instrument. In Brown’s (2016) study, “after reading this article” followed each of the items.

The final scale used in the survey instrument is designed to measure fans’ future behavior intentions after considering the information from the player profile and the treatment. The future behavior items used in the instrument came from a model developed by Trail (2003). The four items that were used are the following:

I am more likely to attend future games.



I am more likely to purchase the team's merchandise.  
 I am more likely to buy (team name) clothing.  
 I am more likely to support the (team name). (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003)

For the purposes of this study, all instances of "the team" or "team name" were replaced with the Tennessee Titans, the name of the NFL team represented by the fictional player, Tyrone Scott. Additionally, as was the case with the above athlete image scale, the future behavior scale was preceded by, "After considering this information."

Trail's model of future behavior "was derived from a review of previous research" (Trail et al, 2003, p. 11). While this model had not been tested for reliability or validity prior to being published in 2003, Trail had previously contributed the Theoretical Model of Sport Spectator Consumption Behavior (2000). This theoretical model "hypothesized a sequence of relationships for the six general factors that would influence intended sport spectator consumption behavior" (Trail et al, 2003, p. 9). One of these six factors is individual motives, most of which are "based on social and psychological needs: vicarious achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, social interaction, drama/excitement, escape (relation), family, physical attractiveness of participants, and quality of physical skill of the participants" (Trail et al, 2003, p. 9). The authors claim, "Substantial evidence supports the idea that most of the above sport spectator motives are correlated" (Trail et al, 2003, p. 9). Due to Trail's history developing spectator motivation models, then, the items used in the current study could be verified through expert validity (See Appendices B, C, and D for survey).

### **Administration of Instruments and Data Collection**

Copies of these survey instruments were administered to the study's participants in person during various sport-related classes at the University of Arkansas; in all, students from 9 different classes participated in the study. Prior to these classes, equal numbers of versions 1, 2,

and 3 were printed and sorted: the order was a repeating pattern of version 1, version 2, and version 3. If a particular class had an enrollment of 40, for example, the closest multiple of 3 above that number (42) was chosen as the number of total copies to print. From there, 14 copies of each version were printed and sorted. Generally there were some copies left over, either due to an overestimate, student absences, or students having previously taken the survey in another class. These copies were then counted, sorted, and included as part of the next estimate.

At the beginning of each class, the instructor introduced the researcher and briefly explained the schedule for the class period. The researcher then spoke to the class about the nature of the research, as well as the details of the current study's survey instrument. In every class but the first one visited, participants were asked not to take the survey if they had already done so previously. The surveys were then distributed one at a time from the front to the back of the 2 far left rows of chairs, then from the back to the front of the next two rows, and so on. The participants then completed the survey with a pen or pencil, presumably after reading the informed consent cover page. In most cases, upon completion, each participant would look up and signal that he or she had finished the survey. In this case, the researcher collected the surveys individually. Other classes' participants brought the surveys to the front of the class to turn them in once they were done. Once everyone had finished, the completed surveys were collected and placed in a bag containing the other completed surveys. Once the sport-related classes had been exhausted, analysis of the data followed.

### **Data Analysis**

Following the data collection process, the results were analyzed using SPSS. The data were first compiled and organized in an Excel spreadsheet. There were columns for each item on the survey, as well as an item indicating which version each participant completed. Each item

in Ohanian's (1990) Source Credibility Scale – as well as the item added by Koo, et al. (2012) – was coded in accordance with the three categories that compose the scale: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. The first 3 items in the scale as it appeared on the survey instrument were: “Unknowledgeable – Knowledgeable,” “Ugly – Beautiful,” and “Dishonest – Honest,” and these were coded as E1, A1, and T1, respectively. The responses to the 5 items for each of the categories were also averaged to come up with composite dependent variables (E, A, T). In addition to the source credibility items, the items for each other scale in the survey – team identification, perceived athlete performance, perceived athlete image, and future behavior intentions – were averaged to create a composite score for each. Each of these had its own column in the spreadsheet, as well.

Trail, Fink, and Anderson's (2003) team identification scale was included on the survey in order to control for potential biases toward the Tennessee Titans, the team on which Tyrone Scott was depicted. This was initially used as a covariate. Because the team identification scores for the sample were quite low ( $M=1.26$ ), the covariate had no significant impact on the results of the study. Therefore, it was removed from the analysis.

Once imported into SPSS, the data were analyzed using the MANOVA procedure. The dependent variables in the analysis were the individual components of source credibility, expertise (E), attractiveness (A), and trustworthiness (T), as well as perceived athlete performance (P), perceived athlete image (I), and future behavior intentions (F). The independent variable in the analysis was survey version (1, 2, or 3). The results of this analysis are detailed in the following chapter.

#### **IV. Results**

The purpose of this study was to determine how knowledge of an athlete's athlete citizenship behaviors affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's performance, source credibility, and image, as well as sport fans' future behavior intentions. For data analysis, SPSS was used to explore the following research questions:

RQ1: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his on-field performance?

RQ2a: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his expertise from a source credibility perspective?

RQ2b: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his attractiveness from a source credibility perspective?

RQ2c: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his trustworthiness from a source credibility perspective?

RQ3: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' perceptions of his image?

RQ4: How does knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affect these fans' future behavior intentions?

#### **MANOVA Results**

A one-way MANOVA was run to determine the differences in the dependent variables (perceived performance, expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, perceive image, & future behavior intentions) based on the independent variable of survey version (1, 2, or 3). The overall MANOVA was significant,  $F(12, 358) = 18.09, p < .0001$ ,

Wilk's  $\lambda = 0.612$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.38$ , at the Bonferroni adjusted level of 0.0167. The MANOVA results are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3

*MANOVA Results*

Wilk's $\lambda$	$F$	$df$	$p$
0.612	18.09	358	.000*

\* indicates significance at the .05 level

**Performance**

The first dependent variable measured in the study is the perceived performance of Tyrone Scott, the fictional athlete presented to the participants. Participants with the positive treatment ( $M=5.74$ ) scored significantly higher than participants with the negative treatment ( $M=4.60$ ),  $p=.000$ . Those with no treatment ( $M=5.27$ ) also scored significantly higher than those with version 2,  $p=.016$ . There was no significant difference between the scores of participants with the positive treatment and those with no treatment. The performance scores are illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4

*Perceived Athlete Performance by Version*

Variable	Version	N	Mean	SD
Performance	Positive	64	5.74	1.13
	Negative	63	4.60	1.49
	None	60	5.27	1.40

**Source Credibility**

Many of the dependent variables in the study are components of Ohanian's (1990) Source Credibility Scale. These components are expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness.

### *Expertise*

Expertise, as well as the other components of the Source Credibility Scale, was measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The expertise score for participants with the positive treatment ( $M=5.63$ ) was significantly higher than the score of those with the negative treatment ( $M=5.02$ ),  $p=.012$ . The expertise score for those with no treatment ( $M=5.69$ ) was also significantly higher than the expertise score from those with negative treatment,  $p=.006$ . There was no significant difference between the positive treatment and no treatment expertise scores. The expertise data are illustrated in Table 5 below.

Table 5

#### *Expertise by Version*

Variable	Version	N	Mean	SD
Expertise	Positive	64	5.63	1.30
	Negative	63	5.02	1.13
	None	60	5.69	1.10

### *Attractiveness*

Attractiveness was the second dependent variable used from the Source Credibility Scale. Participants with positive treatment ( $M=4.36$ ) scored significantly higher than the participants with the negative treatment ( $M=3.40$ ),  $p=.000$ . Participants with no treatment ( $M=4.01$ ) also scored significantly higher than those with negative treatment,  $p=.008$ . There was no significant difference between the scores of the participants with positive treatment and those with no treatment. The data for attractiveness are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

*Attractiveness by Version*

Variable	Version	N	Mean	SD
Attractiveness	Positive	64	4.36	1.16
	Negative	63	3.39	1.01
	None	60	4.01	1.18

*Trustworthiness*

Trustworthiness was the third dependent variable used from the Source Credibility Scale. The scores for those with positive treatment ( $M=5.49$ ) were significantly higher than the scores of those with negative treatment ( $M=3.27$ ),  $p=.000$ . Participants with no treatment ( $M=4.73$ ) also scored significantly higher than those with negative treatment,  $p=.000$ . Scores for those with positive treatment were significantly higher than the scores of those with no treatment,  $p=.001$ . The trustworthiness data are illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7

*Trustworthiness by Version*

Variable	Version	N	Mean	SD
Trustworthiness	Positive	64	5.49	1.35
	Negative	63	3.27	1.02
	None	60	4.74	1.01

**Image**

In addition to performance and source credibility, this study also analyzed responses to Brown's (2016) modified version of Choi and Rifon's (2007) scale measuring perceived athlete image. Participants with positive treatment ( $M=5.52$ ) scored significantly higher than those with negative treatment ( $M=3.04$ ),  $p=.000$ . Those with no

treatment ( $M=4.36$ ) also scored significantly higher than those with negative treatment ( $M=3.04$ ). Those with positive treatment also scored significantly higher than those with no treatment,  $p=.000$ . The perceived athlete image data are illustrated in table 8 below.

Table 8

*Image by Version*

Variable	Version	N	Mean	SD
Image	Positive	64	5.52	1.13
	Negative	63	3.04	1.18
	None	60	4.36	0.99

**Future Behavior**

This study also analyzed responses to items regarding participants' future behavior intentions. Those participants with positive treatment of the survey ( $M=2.17$ ) scored significantly higher than those with negative treatment ( $M=1.40$ ),  $p=.000$ . There was no significant difference found between the scores of participants with positive treatment and no treatment. Likewise, there was no significant difference found between the scores of participants with negative treatment and no treatment. The future behavior data are illustrated below in table 9.

Table 9

*Future Behavior by Version*

Variable	Version	N	Mean	SD
Future Behavior	Positive	64	2.18	1.45
	Negative	63	1.35	0.78
	None	60	1.75	1.26



## Summary

The overall MANOVA was significant,  $F(12, 358) = 18.09, p < .0001$ , Wilk's  $\lambda = 0.612$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.38$ , at the Bonferroni adjusted level of 0.0167. For the majority of the pairwise comparisons between survey versions, at least two significant differences were detected: positive treatment scores were significantly higher than negative treatment scores, and no treatment scores were significantly higher than the negative treatment scores. On the variables of trustworthiness and image, positive treatment scores were significantly higher than no treatment scores. For future behavior, just one significant relationship was observed: positive treatment scores were significantly higher than negative treatment scores. These results are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

## V. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's performance, source credibility, and image, as well as sport fans' future behavior intentions. The study explored six primary research questions. RQ1 asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's performance. RQ2a asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's expertise from a source credibility perspective. RQ2b asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's attractiveness from a source credibility perspective. RQ2c asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's trustworthiness from a source credibility perspective. RQ3 asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's image. RQ4 asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' future behavior intentions. The results detailed in the previous chapter help to answer these questions.

RQ1 asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's performance. Performance – which was intended to be measured fairly objectively – acted as somewhat of a “litmus test” for the individual treatments included in this study: Would something such as perceived performance be affected by what sport fans know of the player off the field? Participants with the positive treatment rated Tyrone Scott's performance significantly higher than those with the negative treatment did, and higher than those with no treatment did (this difference

was not statistically significant). The participants with no additional treatment also perceived Scott to have performed better than the participants with the negative treatment did, but not significantly so. Though none of the treatments had anything to do with Scott's on-field performance, each group assessed his performance differently. This finding suggests that if sport fans are aware of a player's athlete citizenship activities, they may consider the player to perform at a higher level than other fans who are not aware of these activities. The reverse could be true, as well: fans who know of a player's off-the-field troubles may think of him as a lesser performer than fans who are not aware of these issues.

If the off-the-field information provided in the treatments yielded significantly different results for something as objective as performance, it seems likely that a more subjective measure such as likability would be affected similarly. As Koo et al. (2012) reported, "perceived on-field performance was found to have a significant influence on source trustworthiness and expertise, while a non-statistical difference was found in source attractiveness" (p. 154). Their findings "imply that overall source credibility of an athlete endorser could be affected by his or her on-field athletic performance" (p. 154).

RQ2a asked how knowledge of athlete citizenship affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's expertise from a source credibility perspective. In this context, expertise is defined as "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions" (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953, in Ohanian, 1990, p. 41). Given Scott's profession as a football player, it is reasonable to expect that expertise might be the component most closely related to performance. Interestingly, the participants with no treatment rated Scott's expertise more highly than the participants with positive treatment

did. This was not a significant difference, however. As was the case with performance, the participants with the positive treatment rated Scott's expertise significantly higher than the participants with negative treatment did. The scores of those with no treatment, then, were also significantly higher than those with the negative treatment. The treatments could have affected the expertise scores in that some of the anchors (knowledgeable/unknowledgeable, inexperienced/experienced) could be related to decision-making in general, not necessarily expertise relative to Scott's profession as a football player. Taking this into account, it makes sense that the scores of those with the negative treatment would be significantly lower than both of the other versions' participants.

RQ2b asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's attractiveness from a source credibility perspective. Participants with the positive treatment viewed Scott as significantly more attractive than did participants with the negative treatment. Those with no treatment also rated Scott as more attractive than those with the negative treatment did, but there was no significant difference between the two scores. The attractiveness anchors are not explicitly physical, but some can be taken as such: ugly/beautiful, plain/elegant, not sexy/sexy, and unattractive/attractive are examples. This ambiguity is reference by Ohanian (1990), who claims, "the construct of attractiveness is not uni-dimensional and...there are myriad definitions used to operationalize attractiveness" (p. 42). Interestingly, the only difference between the three versions regarding physical appearance is the fact that the "no treatment" group did not contain any kind of a picture. Participants with all three versions saw the headshot and the on-field picture from the player profile, but just those

with the positive and negative treatments saw the picture of Scott signing autographs at a practice. The other set of attractiveness anchors was “not classy/classy.” While this could be viewed from a physical standpoint, it appears to be the item that would be most influenced by examples of athlete citizenship or off-the-field troubles. Thus, while there was minimal difference between the three survey versions in regard to physical depiction of Scott, the presumably varied responses regarding his classiness ultimately contributed to the differences between the participants’ scores.

RQ2c asked how knowledge of an athlete’s charitable activities affects sport fans’ perceptions of the athlete’s trustworthiness from a source credibility perspective. Trustworthiness is defined as “the listener’s degree of confidence in, and level of acceptance of, the speaker and the message” (Ohanian, 1990, p. 41). Of the three components, trustworthiness was the only one in which each relationship between survey versions was found to be significant. Perhaps unsurprisingly, participants with the negative treatment viewed Scott as significantly less trustworthy than the participants with positive treatment and no treatment. Trustworthiness was the only component of the Source Credibility Scale in which a significant difference was observed between participants with the positive treatment and version participants with no treatment. Participants with the positive treatment perceived Scott as significantly more trustworthy than those with no treatment did. This is not unexpected, as those with no treatment did not receive any additional information about Scott; they were only considering his biographical information and on-the-field performance. While some of the trustworthiness anchors (unreliable/reliable, undependable/dependable) could be viewed

in the context of performance, they could also speak to the player's character and off-the-field behavior.

When assessing expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, two common threads were found in all three variables: participants with the positive treatment scored significantly higher than those with the negative treatment, and those with no treatment scored significantly higher than those with the negative treatment. Only for trustworthiness were the positive treatment scores significantly higher than the no treatment scores. Overall, then, the results indicate that participants who were aware of Scott's charitable involvement found him to be significantly more credible than those who were aware of his off-the-field transgressions did. Additionally, participants with no knowledge of Scott's off-the-field behavior – positive or negative – viewed him as significantly more credible than those who were aware of these transgressions viewed him. Those who were made aware of Scott's charitable involvement did find him to be more credible than those who only knew of his background did. While this difference was not found to be statistically significant, it could be useful information in practice. This is expanded upon in the implications section of the study.

RQ3 asked how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's image. As was the case with trustworthiness, there were significant differences between all three versions on image. Not only were the scores significantly higher for those with the positive treatment and no treatment than they were for those with the negative treatment, but the positive treatment scores were significantly higher than the no treatment scores. These differences indicate that perceived image is one of the variables most impacted by the treatments in the current study. These results

also indicate that there is at least some level of disconnect between an athlete's overall source credibility (expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness) and image among sport fans. While individual social responsibility and athlete citizenship are independent from corporate social responsibility, this finding appears to be consistent with Walker and Kent's (2009) claim that participants in their study show a "general positivity" toward CSR in sport, and that teams' CSR activities have a "strong and positive" impact on organizational reputation (p. 758). Perhaps the same applies to individuals as it does to organizations.

The last dependent variable in the study was future behavior. RQ4 asked, "How does knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affect sport fans' future behavior intentions?" Consistent with the rest of the dependent variables, participants with the positive treatment scored significantly higher on this scale than those with the negative treatment. There was no significant difference found between the scores of those with the positive treatment and those with no treatment. Also, there was no significant difference between the scores of those with the negative treatment and those with no treatment. This would suggest that a player's positive off-the-field contributions positively impact fans' intentions to support the player's team. Additionally, this suggests that there is no significant difference between the future intentions of fans who know just the biographical and on-field accomplishments of a player, and fans who know of this information and some off-the-field transgressions. While there was still one statistically significant difference found here, it should be noted that the means of these scores were particularly low (2.18, 1.35, 1.75) compared to the means of the other dependent variables. Scott was depicted as a member of the NFL's Tennessee Titans.

Participants in the study were students enrolled in a public research institution in the southeastern United States, located nearly 530 miles from Nashville, Tennessee, where the Titans play.

A notable takeaway from the results that is not directly addressed in the research questions is that, for all variables in the study except future behavior, scores from participants with the negative treatment were significantly lower than both of the other two treatments' scores. Only for future behavior were the negative treatment scores not significantly lower than the "no treatment" scores. This indicates that while knowledge of charitable activities has a positive impact on perceived performance, source credibility, image, and future behavior intentions, knowledge of off-the-field transgressions has a negative impact on all of these.

### **Implications**

In addition to contributing to the literature, especially through the use of individual social responsibility and athlete citizenship, this study has some practical implications. First, it was observed that participants who received the same player profile but different treatments perceived Tyrone Scott to have performed differently, even though the on-field statistics and accolades were consistent across the three groups. Similarly, participants perceived Scott to be "more of an expert" if they were aware of his charitable activities. There are certain outlets for sport fans that involve their own valuation of players: fantasy football and video games such as the *Madden* franchise are two examples. Perhaps, when making a choice between two comparable players, fans may be inclined to choose the one who has exemplified athlete citizenship.



Ohanian (1990) notes that both attractiveness and trustworthiness are related to positive attitude change. As previously noted, the results relative to how knowledge of an athlete's charitable activities affects sport fans' perceptions of the athlete's attractiveness and trustworthiness indicated that participants who were aware of Tyrone Scott's charitable activities – as well as those who were just aware of the biographical and on-field accomplishments – find him to be significantly more attractive and trustworthy than the fans who were only aware of his background and off-the-field incidents. Those who were aware of Scott's charitable activities also found him to be significantly more trustworthy than those who were just aware of his background. Combined with the primary takeaway from the image dependent variable – the significant difference between the positive treatment and no treatment scores – this information could be useful to professional athletes who wish to promote or enhance their own personal brands. Athletes who go about their business and stay out of trouble could seemingly receive an additional boost to their public perception if their charitable activities were promoted. Also, if an athlete does have a few off-the-field incidents in his or her past, he or she could promote community or charitable activities as an image repair strategy. Babiak et al. (2012) note that while athlete motivations for establishing foundations are “complex and nuanced,” athletes “who form foundations appear to consider the strategic implications of their philanthropic work” (p. 172). Athletes promoting their charitable contributions would be another example of them considering these strategic implications.

An athlete's perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness, and image among fans could also have implications for the media. Because the fans who were aware of Scott's

off-the-field contributions viewed him as most attractive and trustworthy, and because the fans who read about his arrest and suspensions viewed him as significantly less attractive and trustworthy than the other two groups, there is some incentive for sports programmers to more prominently feature stories about how athletes contribute to their communities. One current media trend is that news Web sites have established their own pages dedicated to “good” or “uplifting” news stories. Some examples are *The Huffington Post*, *ABC News*, *Reddit*, and *TODAY*. Given Ohanian’s (1990) assertion that both attractiveness and trustworthiness are related to positive attitude change, and given that participants in this study who were aware of Scott’s charitable activities found him to be significantly more trustworthy than the other two groups, sites such as *ESPN* and *FOX Sports* might find that they have an audience that would be receptive to such a page focused on uplifting athletes.

While legal issues and suspensions in sport can be newsworthy, the reporting of such issues doesn’t have to outweigh the promotion of numerous charitable and community activities by athletes in any given sport. The results of this study provide some data to back up NFL star Larry Fitzgerald’s plea for the media to “cover the good with as much enthusiasm as the bad” (Fitzgerald, 2015, para. 12). Should the media promote more “good” stories, cultivation theory implies that viewers’ perceptions of athletes could change as a result. Cultivation theory “proposes that our views on reality are cultivated by television, which serves to create basic sets of beliefs” (Yoo, Smith, & Kim, 2013, p. 12). If viewers are exposed to more stories of athletes helping in their communities, their “basic sets of beliefs” regarding professional athletes could be changed for the better. While promotion of these stories could come from sport

television networks such as *ESPN* or *Fox Sports*, there are also other avenues available. Sport organization public relations personnel could choose to promote these stories on the team's Web page and the team's social media accounts. Additionally, players could promote these stories on their own social media accounts or by using outlets such as *The Players' Tribune*, which allows players and coaches to publish editorials directly.

Regarding how knowledge of the athlete's charitable activities affects fans' future behavior intentions, this study offers some fairly significant marketing implications for professional sport teams. While mean scores were low, likely due to the lack of Titans fans in the sample or the possibility that study participants may not have disposable income to spend on NFL games, there were still significant differences detected between participants who received the positive treatment and those who received either of the other two treatments. This indicates that promoting athletes' off-the-field contributions could be well worthwhile for teams as they look to sell tickets and merchandise to their fans. The fact that the fans who knew of Scott's community contributions were significantly more likely to support the Titans than even those who just knew of Scott's background shows that there are opportunities for teams to appeal to their fans by simply getting the word out about what their players do in the community. Recalling Babiak and Trendafilova's (2010) study, sport teams promoting these contributions would be an additional example of teams "taking advantage of the strategic opportunities offered through these types of activities" (p. 17).

### **Limitations**

One limitation of the study is that participants were enrolled in multiple sport management classes, which were the classes used for the sample. With each successive

class surveyed, fewer students completed the instrument; they were discouraged from taking the survey if they had previously done so. After nine classes, the ultimate sample size ended up being 187 students. Though the college student sample is considered a delimitation, one limitation stemming from this is that many of the participants may not have as much disposable income as sport fans who have either graduated from college and/or are part of the workforce. Thus, these student participants may be less likely to attend games or purchase team merchandise. This is especially true considering the team involved in the study, the Tennessee Titans. Though closer to this particular university than most NFL teams, Nashville is still close to 530 miles away from the participants' university.

### **Future Research**

This study has offered some practical implications for professional athletes, sports programmers, and professional sports teams. Given the sample, however, some of these implications could be strengthened by future, more localized studies. Based on the future behavior results, very few participants in this study may actually plan to attend a Titans game or purchase Titans merchandise in the future. Would a sample from Nashville or elsewhere in the market be different? If the significance remains, but the mean scores increase, this provides even more of a reason for sports teams to promote their athletes' off-the-field contributions. Another suggestion for future researchers who might be interested in a similar area is to use a more varied sample. While this sample was representative of an undergraduate college student sport fan population, perhaps other studies could include participants who are currently in the workforce and/or are older than these students. Sports fans come in all ages and backgrounds, so additional samples

for a similar study would help to strengthen any significant relationships detected.

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## **Appendix A – Informed Consent Form**

As a student with an academic interest in sports, you have been selected for a research project in the college of Health, Human Performance and Recreation at the University of Arkansas. This research will be used to determine how athlete citizenship affects an athlete's likability among sports fans. By participating in this survey, you will help to exhibit how professional athletes are perceived today. Ultimately, this information could be used to affect how professional teams promote their athletes' charitable contributions, as well as how these athletes may use promotional or image repair strategies.

All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. The return of this survey to the researcher serves as your consent for the information to be used for this project.

The following questionnaire should take no longer than 7 minutes to complete. If you feel uncomfortable answering any of the items on the questionnaire, you may leave them incomplete. By completing the following questionnaire, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate.

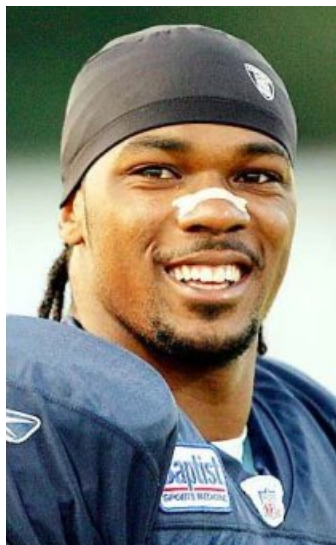
Finally, if you have questions or concerns regarding the study, feel free to contact Greg Stine by phone at (479) 225-8345 or by e-mail at [gstine@uark.edu](mailto:gstine@uark.edu). You may also contact Dr. Steve Dittmore, the project faculty advisor, at [dittmore@uark.edu](mailto:dittmore@uark.edu). For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Ro Windwalker, IRB Coordinator at the University of Arkansas, by phone at (479) 575-2208 or by e-mail at [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).

Thank you for your time!

## Appendix B – Instrument Version 1

Please review the player profile below.

---



### Tyrone Scott

Wide Receiver, Tennessee Titans

Born: October 3, 1980, Pahokee, Florida

6'1", 203 lbs.

Drafted: 2<sup>nd</sup> round, 2003

#### Career highlights:

- 2003 NFL AP Offensive Rookie of the Year
- Selected to the Pro Bowl in 2003, 2006, and 2008
- Led NFL with 100.1 receiving yards per game in 2005
- Currently 12<sup>th</sup> all-time with 1,009 receptions



Please review the below information and complete the items on the following pages.

---



- In 2004, Scott established the Tyrone Scott Foundation, which “is dedicated to expanding the educational and life opportunities of underprivileged children.”
- His foundation hosts an annual summer enrichment program, through which students in Scott’s hometown of Pahokee, Florida, can catch up academically using a “credit-recovery curriculum.”
- The foundation has also awarded eight four-year scholarships to students who demonstrate financial need, have displayed academic excellence, and are leaders in the community.
- Scott has been involved with Oxfam America since 2010, making trips to Africa to help various communities in Ethiopia and Senegal. Initially he contributed \$10,000 to help with farming and livestock needs of villagers.
- Scott’s foundation’s signature event is a free annual festival that consists of celebrity golf tournaments, basketball games/tournaments, a fitness walk, and a day of fun in the park.
- Additionally, the foundation provides seasonal services such as Thanksgiving dinners, holiday shopping sprees, and back to school items.
- Scott received the NFLPA’s Byron “Whizzer” White Award in 2014; the award honors “the player who serves his team, community and country in the spirit of Byron Raymond ‘Whizzer’ White.”
- The NFL recently named Scott the 2015 Walter Payton Man of the Year; this award “recognizes an NFL player for his excellence on and off the field.”

Please indicate your current age: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your current classification: Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior

Please indicate your gender: \_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I consider myself to be a “real” fan of the Titans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the Titans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being a fan of the Titans is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This player’s performance has been:

Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Inconsistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Consistent
Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependable

To me, this player is:

Unknowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Knowledgeable
Ugly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beautiful
Dishonest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest
Inexperienced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Experienced
Not classy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Classy
Plain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Elegant
Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependable
Not an expert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	An expert
Insincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sincere
Unskilled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Skilled
Not sexy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sexy
Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Untrustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Trustworthy
Unqualified	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Qualified
Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive

After considering this information:

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I believe this athlete is wise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe this athlete is pleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe I could be comfortable around this athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe this athlete is sophisticated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

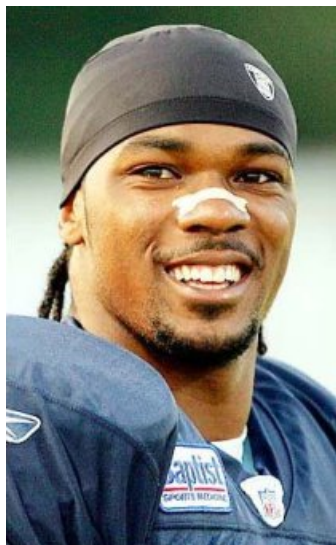
	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I am more likely to attend future Titans games.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to purchase Titans merchandise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to buy Titans clothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to support the Titans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for your participation!

## Appendix C – Instrument Version 2

Please review the player profile below.

---



### Tyrone Scott

Wide Receiver, Tennessee Titans

Born: October 3, 1980, Pahokee, Florida

6'1", 203 lbs.

Drafted: 2<sup>nd</sup> round, 2003

#### Career highlights:

- 2003 NFL AP Offensive Rookie of the Year
- Selected to the Pro Bowl in 2003, 2006, and 2008
- Led NFL with 100.1 receiving yards per game in 2005
- Currently 12<sup>th</sup> all-time with 1,009 receptions





Please review the below information and complete the items on the following pages.

---



- The NFL suspended Scott 4 games in 2015 after he tested positively for performance-enhancing substances.
- In 2008, Scott was arrested for speeding and marijuana possession. Scott's vehicle was pulled over for going 48 MPH in a 35 MPH zone, and officers found 14.6 grams of marijuana in the vehicle. Scott was released on a \$750 bond.
- The NFL suspended Scott 1 game in 2007 for violating the league's personal conduct policy.



Please indicate your current age: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your current classification: Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior

Please indicate your gender: \_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I consider myself to be a “real” fan of the Titans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the Titans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being a fan of the Titans is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This player’s performance has been:

Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Inconsistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Consistent
Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependable

To me, this player is:

Unknowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Knowledgeable
Ugly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beautiful
Dishonest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest
Inexperienced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Experienced
Not classy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Classy
Plain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Elegant
Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependable
Not an expert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	An expert
Insincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sincere
Unskilled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Skilled
Not sexy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sexy
Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Untrustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Trustworthy
Unqualified	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Qualified
Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive

After considering this information:

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I believe this athlete is wise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe this athlete is pleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe I could be comfortable around this athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe this athlete is sophisticated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

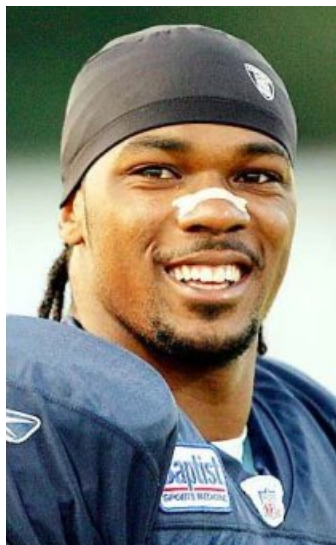
	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I am more likely to attend future Titans games.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to purchase Titans merchandise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to buy Titans clothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to support the Titans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for your participation!

## Appendix D – Instrument Version 3

Please review the player profile below and complete the items on the following pages.

---



### Tyrone Scott

Wide Receiver, Tennessee Titans

Born: October 3, 1980, Pahokee, Florida

6'1", 203 lbs.

Drafted: 2<sup>nd</sup> round, 2003

#### Career highlights:

- 2003 NFL AP Offensive Rookie of the Year
- Selected to the Pro Bowl in 2003, 2006, and 2008
- Led NFL with 100.1 receiving yards per game in 2005
- Currently 12<sup>th</sup> all-time with 1,009 receptions



Please indicate your current age: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your current classification: Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior

Please indicate your gender: \_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I consider myself to be a “real” fan of the Titans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the Titans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being a fan of the Titans is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This player’s performance has been:

Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Inconsistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Consistent
Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependable

To me, this player is:

Unknowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Knowledgeable
Ugly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beautiful
Dishonest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest
Inexperienced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Experienced
Not classy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Classy
Plain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Elegant
Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependable
Not an expert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	An expert
Insincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sincere
Unskilled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Skilled
Not sexy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sexy
Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Untrustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Trustworthy
Unqualified	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Qualified
Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive

After considering this information:

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I believe this athlete is wise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe this athlete is pleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe I could be comfortable around this athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe this athlete is sophisticated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I am more likely to attend future Titans games.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to purchase Titans merchandise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to buy Titans clothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to support the Titans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for your participation!

## Appendix E – IRB Approval Letter



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS

Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board

April 8, 2016

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Gregory Stine  
Stephen Dittmore

FROM: Ro Windwalker  
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 16-03-671

Protocol Title: *How Athlete Citizenship Affects an Athlete's Likability among Sports Fans*

Review Type: ☒ EXEMPT ☐ EXPEDITED ☐ FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 04/06/2016 Expiration Date: 04/05/2017

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

**This protocol has been approved for 200 participants.** If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).